



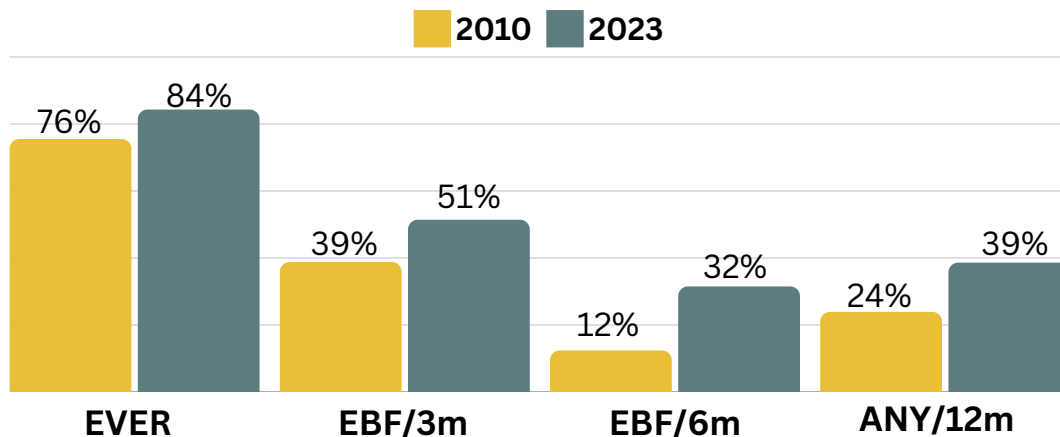
The **Nebraska Breastfeeding Coalition (NE BFC)** is a network of individual members and organizational partners dedicated to improving the health of Nebraskans by making human milk feeding the norm via education, advocacy, and collaboration. We have been working together since 2009 to share information and partner in activities that increase human milk feeding rates across the state and support lactation providers and the families they serve.

### ***Why is a Breastfeeding Coalition Necessary?***

Breastfeeding and the feeding of human milk has been identified as a major factor in improving the health of our country, especially for vulnerable populations: families of color, families living with poverty, premature and at-risk infants, and mothers experiencing mental health challenges. Optimal infant nutrition is the first step in obtaining food security for all children in Nebraska.

### **Centers for Disease Control Breastfeeding Report Card for Nebraska**

The CDC has tracked breastfeeding rates in Nebraska since 2007. The four gold standards are: Ever Breastfed (**EVER**), Exclusive Breastfeeding at 3 months (**EBF/3m**), Exclusive Breastfeeding at 6 months (**EBF/6m**), and Any Breastfeeding at 12 months (**ANY/12m**). Breastfeeding rates have slowly increased since the inception of the NE BFC, however, fewer than 33% of Nebraska babies are exclusively breastfed for the recommended six months.



### **Lactation Care as a Primary Intervention Strategy**

The Nebraska Breastfeeding Coalition aims to increase breastfeeding rates by supporting a wide network of breastfeeding advocates and lactation providers to deliver quality, effective care to families in a variety of settings throughout our communities.

The U.S. Surgeon General’s Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding (Action 11) identifies lactation professionals as an essential medical service for families and advocates for increasing the number of racially diverse IBCLCs. Mothers of color face many barriers when it comes to providing human milk for their babies and they are less likely to breastfeed. Increasing the number of racially diverse IBCLCs is one strategy to decrease barriers for mothers of color.

## The Nebraska Breastfeeding Coalition benefits its members by:

- MEMBERSHIP: Free membership upon registration.
- NETWORKING: Quarterly Zoom and In Person meetings for members to brainstorm, network, and share effective strategies and programs. This is especially important for members who work in rural or small towns or serve unique populations (families new to America or of color).
- EDUCATION: Our website, social media, and digital monthly email newsletters which share educational opportunities, current breastfeeding news and research, and highlight model programs. Lactation education sessions are offered quarterly to our membership.
- ACCESS: An online Lactation Support Directory Map connecting providers with providers & families with providers.
- OUTREACH: IBCLC Zoom Mentor meetings to support women of color and rural women who wish to pursue their IBCLC certification.

## The Nebraska Breastfeeding Coalition's 2024 - 2025 Goals are:

- Increase our membership from 104 to 140.
- Maintain at least 26% racial diversity and 31% rural diversity (outside metro Lincoln & Omaha) in our membership to mirror the makeup of our state's population and ensure diverse representation.
- Host four Quarterly Member Meetings, issue 12 monthly email newsletters, and share 100 educational social media posts.
- Mentor at least 10 women of color or rural women in their pursuit of becoming an IBCLC candidate.
- Increase the number of providers on the online directory map from 74 to 120.
- Maintain diversity on the Leadership Team from a geographic and racial/cultural perspective.
- Offer a CERP (IBLCE approved education session) at each Quarterly Member Meeting.
- Develop a network of organizational partners to expand our support for vital MCH issues.
- Acknowledge a minimum of ten Breastfeeding Friendly Businesses in Nebraska.

## About the Coalition

The Nebraska Breastfeeding Coalition is a group of dedicated volunteers who are passionate about supporting lactation providers and breastfeeding families. Donors support a part-time paid administrative coordinator, fiscal agent fees, continuing education fees, and communication and technology costs. Additional funding allows the NE BFC to support outreach projects. The NE BFC operates under the auspices of Health Partners Initiative, a 501C3 non-profit.

To become a Member of the Nebraska Breastfeeding Coalition, or to become a Financial Donor, scan the QR codes on this page or visit our website. To contribute via check, mail your envelope to: **Nebraska Breastfeeding Coalition, c/o Tami Frank** at the address below.



**Membership**



**Donations**

# The Importance of Addressing Disparities in Breastfeeding Rates and Lactation Care in Nebraska

The Nebraska Breastfeeding Coalition acknowledges the vital need to address the inequities in breastfeeding rates for women of color, as well as the lack of diversity in lactation providers in our state.

## Disparities in Breastfeeding Rates

Since 2007, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has issued a Breastfeeding Report Card listing the percent of infants who are breastfed. In Nebraska, from 2007 - 2023, Ever Breastfed rates have increased from 79.3% to 84.3% and Exclusive Breastfed at 6 month rates have increased from 9.8% to 31.5%. The World Health Organization and all public health experts recommend exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months.

Certain populations, in particular mothers of color born in the U.S., have lower than average breastfeeding rates. In Nebraska, at 12 weeks, White mothers have substantially higher breastfeeding rates than Hispanic, Black, or Native American mothers (38.4% vs. 24.2% vs. 22.4% vs. 20.2%). *PRAMS data 2020.*

Historically, mothers of all cultures and races have breastfed their babies; however, we know that systemic racism and oppression have created unique barriers for women of color to breastfeed. The stress of racism increases a woman's allostatic load and negatively impacts her health. This in turn impacts her ability to provide human milk for her baby. Many women of color do not have paid maternity leave or workplace support for pumping. In addition, non-White newborns are offered formula more frequently in the hospital after delivery. Cultural shifts over time also contribute to norms around human milk feeding in communities of color.

## Disparities in Lactation Care

We know that health outcomes improve when mothers are cared for by providers who relate to their unique cultural and racial identities.

In 2021, the Nebraska Breastfeeding Coalition made a conscious cultural shift to acknowledge the lack of diversity in lactation providers and the Coalition itself. The current Leadership Team recognizes the urgent need to increase the number of lactation professionals of color, elevate the voices of historically under-represented groups in the Coalition, and approach the Coalition's work through an equity lens.

## To Achieve this, the Nebraska Breastfeeding Coalition Continues to:

- Recruit individuals of color to join the NE BFC and to serve on the Leadership Team (LT). Currently four of the nine LT members identify as non-White.
- Increase the number of lactation professionals of color in Nebraska via an IBCLC Mentoring Program. Currently there are 148 IBCLCs in Nebraska. Four of the 148 (2.7%) have been identified as an IBCLC of color. By comparison, ~26% of Nebraska residents identify as a person of color.

*We ask you to join us in our mission to make human milk accessible and achievable for ALL families in the state of Nebraska.*

# Nebraska Breastfeeding Coalition

## 2022 - 2025 Strategic Goals

**Strategic Goal One:** Improve the lactation work force through diversification and professional support by 2025.

- Increase educational opportunities: Offer LCERPs at quarterly meetings, regularly communicate professional development opportunities to membership, promote Breastfeeding Educator Basics course to provide contact hours for Nebraska CLCs.
- Support viable and sustainable IBCLC training efforts for aspiring IBCLCs of color: Identify models for promoting diversification of IBCLCs, serve as a liaison for training program development and evaluation efforts, recruit mentors and sponsors to support current Nebraska professionals seeking their IBCLC.

**Strategic Goal Two:** Increase Coalition visibility and reach among Nebraska community partners by 2025.

- Grow the general membership to create a network of knowledge and practice.
- Equitably build the capacity of local Community Breastfeeding Initiatives through resource sharing and brokering partnerships: Identify 10 CBIs supporting rural communities and communities of color, maintain a contact list and map of CBIs with updated information, provide a regular means for checking in with CBIs to assess capacity needs and promote cross-pollination of ideas.

**Strategic Goal Three:** Increase Coalition advocacy efforts by 2025 for relevant policies and practices at the local, state, and national levels that promote breastfeeding in Nebraska.

- Regularly engage local and state partners, including those representing health systems, to discuss policies and practices impacting the lactation work force and/or breastfeeding families: Maintain a list of relevant, intersectional, and strategic policy and advocacy experts, engage experts to regularly update the Coalition on policy and advocacy work, partner with local and state level agencies and health systems to support policies and practices to promote increasing intention, initiation, duration, and exclusivity.
- Monitor and advocate for national policies and practices promoting breastfeeding intention, initiation, duration, and exclusivity: Regularly engage with the leading national resources on breastfeeding, monitor national policies and advocacy efforts intersecting with breastfeeding support, regularly disseminate information about national level efforts and their implications at the state and local level.